

Twin Falls RAC Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2005

ATTENDANCE

RAC: Debbie Dane, Mel Quale, Ken Sanders, Jake Zollenger, Joe Tugaw, Kelly Adams, Marc Brackett, Bud Bedke, and Mike Tylka.

BLM: Howard Hedrick, Bill Baker, Rick VanderVoet, Zachary Oper, Wendy Reynolds, Mike Aoi, Scott Barker, Sky Buffat, and Beckie Wagoner.

(Note: correction in last meetings attendance: Debbie Dane was in attendance.)

9:15 the meeting was called to order by Kelly Adams, RAC president.
Welcomes were made by Kelly and Howard Hedrick, BLM District Manager.

Due to lack of RAC members the minutes from the previous two meetings were not approved.

Kelly addressed ways to get the RAC members more involved in the meetings and attendance. Idea's included:

- Emails in addition to the letters that are sent out.
- A letter from Kelly to the members stating the importance of each member's role in the RAC.

Fire

Mike Aoi, Assistant Fire Management Officer, gave a breakdown of the fires thus far:

Shoshone Field Office:

- 44 human caused

Burley Field Office:

- 44,051 acres burned
 - ~1,021 belonged to state
 - 7 caused by lightning
 - 12 by humans but not arson related

Jarbidge Field Office:

- 22 fires
 - ~ 44,000 acres

Fire is at full capability now:

- Bought 10 tankers from AZ. for pre-positioning.
- Funding was requested for situations requiring more dozers/equipment.
- 2 helicopters dedicated
- 2 planes dedicated

Most of the fires have been wind driven and more are expected before end of year.
 There have been 11 rural assists.
 Last year 1,604 acres burned. This year's burns are 4-6 times greater than last year.
 We are continuing education on fires to the community.

The Tanker/Air Base has quickened the response times as well as several pre-positioned 24 hour Guard stations in:

- Kimama
- Carey
- Bellevue
- Rogerson
- Malta
- Juniper Butte

We also have day guard stations in:

- Saylor Creek
- Castleford
- Hagerman

Weed Free Hay Proposal:

Kelly Adams

The greatest impact is on the sheep. There is an over abundance of Scotch Thistle this year.

Kelly proposed a subgroup to determine if it should be supported or not. It was decided to wait on the subgroup.

Craters of the Moon National Monument:

Rick VanderVoet

Plan status is in review and will be mailed out to members soon.

The Federal Register notice will be printed Friday at which time the 30 day protest time begins. Projected protests include Blue Ribbon and Western Water Sheds.

BLM website is still not available, but the Park Service should have it on their site, but they are going through some challenges to get it released.

Science Symposium will be held in early Oct. It will be focusing on Geology, with the hopes of bringing more school participation to Craters.

Private lands are excluded from the monument lands, and there is no live water on the monument land.

We are in the process of getting all land exchange proposals serialized and sorted into three main categories:

1. Exchanges consistent with the plan or high in resources.
2. Those without many conflicts
3. Those that Don't meet the 10 year plan

We are looking at a third party contractor for smaller exchanges. The contractor will be paid from the land sales.

Howard requested RAC help determine which category the exchanges/sales fall under, and in determining what BLM should require for the exchanges and to keep it well balanced.

A subgroup was formed of: (italicized names will be contacted by Mel to see if they are interested in being on the subgroup).

- Mike
- Joe
- *Scott*
- *Debbie*
- Mel
- *Dennis*
- *Yvette*

A priority list was set:

- Energy programs (coal, wind, etc.)
- Right-of-Way
- Commercial
- Public
- Private

TNR Litigation Update

Howard Hedrick

Jarbridge Field Office:

- Western Water Sheds temporary forage permits required two Environmental Assessments (EA) two years ago. The Judge found the following:
 - Not complying with NEPA
 - Ruling allowed BLM to continue the permits
 - Aug 1st the Judge decided the EA's were a patchwork job and they needed to be brought together for a more in-depth and comprehensive EA.
 - Also said we didn't allow public comment time.
 - Since the 28 allotments are scattered throughout the EA it impacts all permittee's, so he wants them lumped together more.
 - ordered no more permits.

(Decision was based on Sage Grouse).

There are 3,800 cattle affected by this ruling, the livestock is not required to be moved until Aug 19th. We are hoping an agreement will be reached prior to that date.

BLM sees RAC as a tool in the form of formulating a stance; a communicator with congressmen.

Subgroup:

Ken, Debbie, Joe, Marc

Meeting: Evergreen bldg. CSI Campus Monday, Aug 15th, at 1:00.

* Idaho Rural Partnership Committee should be informed.

Cottrell Mountain Wind Power Project

Scott Barker

Scott reviewed the alternatives B & C again with C being the “preferred” alternative. Alternative C has an extensive mitigation package and public access plan that responds to issues during scoping that will improve public access by gating the construction road, which keeps the public on existing roads.

Scheduled Public Meetings results:

Albion- 64/65 people with good discussion/comments.

Burley- light attendance but more receptive.

Boise- approximately 30 people

There is ongoing consultation with tribes during the comment period. The Sage Grouse Study is also ongoing in that area; it will be monitored throughout the project as well. The majority of the RAC is for the project.

Subgroup: Kelly (lead), Mike, Marc, (*Scott will be asked to join*). Meeting scheduled for Aug 17th at the Pressbox at 12:00.

Clover Fire

Burned 193,000 acres, 152 were public lands. Crested Wheat grass will go on 10,000 acres, 40% Native sage habitat. 40,000 sage brushes will be planted this winter. 111 miles are already rehabbed, 51 miles of protection fence and 5 internal fences.

Two main issues are:

- 4 mile suppression and 4 ½ mile rehab.
- Horses; there was 13,000 acres burned where the wild horses roamed, approximately 350 horses.
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We are doing an emergency gather of the wild horses. The older horses will go to Delta Utah to a sanctuary. The others will go to the Boise corrals to be processed for adoption. The adoption will be held Sept 10th – 11th.

BLM Changes/Updates

Howard Hedrick

New Shoshone Field Manager – Lori Armstrong will start Sept 5th
New Burley Field Manager – Ken Miller will start Oct 2nd

Law Enforcement Update

Zach Oper

New Ranger Stephanie Ellis is headed to training for several months then will be back first part of next year.

We currently have Law Enforcement agreements with 13 counties. These agreements play a vital role in assisting the BLM.

Thanks

Howard Hedrick

Travis and Tom have completed their terms and have chosen not to serve another term; Howard thanked them both for their service and had certificates of appreciation for them.

Jake announced he will be leaving us early due to family commitments.
All members will be missed.

There are 3 more members that will reach term end in Sept. they will be deciding if they would like to serve another term. They are: Kelly, Bud, and Mel.

* Wendy then said her good-byes and thanks.

Next Meeting:

- Nov 29th at Twin Falls, 9:00 am
- Feb 7th at Twin Falls, 9:00 am